The Builder.

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SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1848.

MID the "press of a tumultuous crowd," as an old chronicler writes, we strove on Monday last to get some idea of the 1,474* works of art which line the walls of the Royal Academy, and shew what our artists have been at during the past year. Join these with the 800 works exhibited by the Society of British Artists; 474 in the British Institution; 516 in the Free Exhibition at Hyde-park-corner; 346 by the old Water-colour Society, mentioned hereafter; 413 by the new Water-colour Society, and at least 1,500 which have been returned to the artists, for want of merit on the one side, or want of room on the other—making a total of 5,523—and they afford a sufficiently striking evidence of the industry of the British school, without counting the large number never exhibited at all, and the larger number shewn only in the provinces.

The collection at the Academy is a good one—above the average—but not better than last year. The hangers do not seem to us to have done the most that was possible for the pictures; but knowing well the difficulties which beset this operation—the many interests which have to be studied, and the impossibility of pleasing all parties—we shall not say much on this head in respect of the general exhibition. As regards it, however, in what used to be called

The Architectural Room, silence on our part would be crime. Architecture has long been scurvily treated in the Academy—elbowed and shouldered by live lions and rustic swains. On the present occasion, the hangers have evidently sought to give her the *coup de grace*: there is, in truth, no longer an architectural room in the Academy. Two sides of the room are wholly occupied by oil paintings: and on the other two sides the drawings are piled up to the ceiling, so that it is perfectly impossible to see what many of them represent. As a natural result of the course which has been pursued in former years, the collection is very indifferent, and would afford us little evidence in our attempt to rebut the often repeated charge, that the art of architecture is on the decline in England.

We are glad to think, however, that the condition of the art is not quite so bad as it will appear to foreign architects who visit Trafalgar-square,—that notwithstanding there was no evidence of it on the walls of the architectural room—we have a national building in progress worthy to rank with one of any age or people,—that churches are rising in every hamlet of the kingdom, and railway stations in all parts of the country, which, if not evidence of the most perfect state of artistic ability, are yet creditable to their producers, as happy instances of adaptation, arising out of a research into the history and developed principles of the art,—and that our street architecture is improving.

At a first glance, a few Elizabethan schools and houses (red brick and stone, which colour so easily), two or three chapels, carefully copied from existing examples, half-a-dozen designs already published in our pages, some drawings of architectural antiquities, and a few of the designs which were submitted for the Army and Navy Club, seem to make up the show. A closer examination enables us to say something more hereafter, but this is the first impression. There are very few men of standing amongst the exhibitors,—henceforth there will probably be fewer,—of the academician architects only one.

This inevitable result is much to be regretted. We know of few more important aids in the improvement of architectural instruction than the exhibition of designs; each architect there learns more from his neighbour than months of study might give. The loss by piracy of his design is comparatively nothing to the exhibitor, for it is not by enabling us to take fac-similes of good features in designs that the exhibitor benefits his fellow architects, but rather by suggesting currents of thought, and affording opportunities for comparison. At best—or worst—of little value must be the ideas of him who cannot afford to give some away. We certainly look upon public exhibition of designs as an important aid for the progress of the art, which it is the interest of every one to minister to; we felt this strongly in going over the competition designs for the Army and Navy Club; and if the annual exhibition at the Academy is not equally interesting to us, it is certainly by no means valueless, whilst for the great object of educating the public eye, it might be made an engine of the greatest service.

Amongst the drawings already published by us are our contributor, Mr. Truefitt's, clever design for the Army and Navy Club (1,233), likewise the design which is "now erecting in Pall-mall" (1,187). In our review of the Army and Navy Club competition, we noticed the other designs which are now again exhibited, namely, Mr. Tattersall's prize design (1,006), and (1,229), that with a rounded corner. The design by Messrs. Allom and Cross (1,216 and 1,117), Mr. Payne's design (1,171), and Mr. Johnson's design (1,294), and we have further engraved views of the buildings shown in 1,194, "Proposed Municipal Hall for Sheffield," T. J. Flockton; and of the "Clock Tower and Engine-house at Epsom, Surrey," J. R. R. Butler and H. Hodge, as well as given views of buildings of which further illustrations are here exhibited. Elizabethan architecture, as we have said, has been much called into play, although seldom with the precise character of the style, or with even that beauty of which it is capable. With reference to drawing, we do not notice the same excellence that the exhibition usually presents, and in colouring, the late comments of the professor of architecture, to which, however, we would not be understood as offering objection, might seem to have had some influence.

Amongst the churches, that erecting at Laverstock Green, Herts, by R. Brandon (1,102) is one of the best, and the double bell turret combines well with the nave and aisles. A "Design for the west elevation of a Church" (1,103), took us some trouble to find, for it is in that unknown style, the Greek. By combining the portico of the Agora with the turrets of Mr. Cockerell's Church in Regent-street, Mr. E. L. Tarbuck has certainly produced that which has as much claim to be a design as many a church in a more favoured style. The "Design for the interior of a room, decorated with illustrations of the Coldstream Guards," (1104) by H. Shaw, and (1289) "Drawing of an Ancient State Pall belonging to the Company of Fishmongers of London," by the same artist, are works which are positively wonderful for the amount of labour in careful drawing and colouring which they contain. In the latter, every stitch of the worsted appears, and we really doubt whether the artist has not given us some woven material rather than a drawing. The design is a happy arrangement of colour, though possibly as a drawing deficient in artistic effect.

The appropriate character of design for a railway station seems difficult to decide, since there are designs of all descriptions, even by the same architect. Doubtless directors require that there should be variety upon a line, but does it not show greatly a want of invention, that variety can only be obtained by change of style? Mr. Doyley's version (1109) has a central arch flanked by porticoes. "The Stoke Station," now erecting from the designs of Mr. R. A. Stent, is superior to many of the Elizabethan attempts, being certainly in the spirit of the style.

Mr. S. S. Teulon, in 1114, "The additions now making at Skendleby, in the county of Lincoln, for Sir Edward Blackenbury," has shown ability; his design evinces a taste which ought to be appreciated. Though altering an old building, he has contrived to produce much novelty of effect, yet with a comparatively small outlay. No. 1115, is a "House now erecting at Southend, Sydenham, for S. Forster, Esq.," by Coe and Goodwin, and is Elizabethan, and not without merit. There is a large porch of good character, and the effect of the building is aided by the pierced boundary wall. On the importance of attention to such points as the last, we have often expressed an opinion. The design would have been more effective if the building had stood upon a slight eminence.

"The Schools at Knowl Hill, Berks" (1,119), by J. Turner, are picturesque and appropriate. 1,120 is "A View of the New Prison for the Borough of Liverpool," C. J. Peirce. The "Design for a Collegiate School and Master's Residence," R. M. Phipson (1,123), is the fantastic version of "Elizabethan," which, though perhaps not without *precedent*, we cannot understand the merit of in modern design. The "House now erecting for Lord de Mauley," H. Clutton (1,124), is a good design in the Gothic style, with oriel windows and gables; an exception to most modern Gothic houses, in which no material but red brick seems to be worth adopting—this house is of stone; the site is not stated. From Mr. J. W. Daukes we have the "North-east View of Trinity Church, now being erected at Brompton, Kent" (1,128); the style is, as usual, early decorated, and the tower stands at the east end of the north aisle. Now that it has been discovered that during the middle ages towers occupied other positions than the centre of the west end, we scarcely see a modern design with a tower in that position: it should not be forgotten that the west end is, generally speaking, the most advantageous position. Of course we are only hinting an objection to its being removed from that place without reason; in the present instance, as in many others, another position may have been chosen with great propriety; the tapering of the spire might, we think, be lessened with advantage. Mr. E. Walters exhibits a design for a church (1,138), and two designs for villas (1,174); in the latter there are some pleasing features. Mr. Teulon, besides the drawing already mentioned, exhibits the "Schools recently erected at Cantley, in Yorkshire" (1,142), good and appropriate designs, "The new Entrance between the Court of Almshouses, recently erected at Holkham for the Earl of Leicester" (1,176), "The Almshouses now erecting at Riby, Lincoln" (1,198), and the "New Church and School now erecting in St. Stephen's, Southwark" (1,228). The last-mentioned design shows a low broach, similar

* 1,481 last year.

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